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## Bringing Sensory Anthropology to Consumer Research

### Abstract

**Purpose**—Multisensory stimulation is integral to experiential consumption. However, a gap persists between recognition of the importance of multisensory stimulation and the research techniques used to study the effects of such stimulation on consumption experiences. This article draws on sensory anthropology to narrow the gap.

**Methodology**—Sensory anthropology has the potential to help consumer researchers understand multisensory stimulation and its effect on consumption experiences. To highlight this potential, ethnographic fieldwork is reported for two related experiential settings: yacht racing and adventure racing.

**Findings**—It is shown how consumer researchers can apply concepts and data collection techniques from sensory anthropology to derive powerful insights into consumption experiences. A set of guidelines and examples derive from embodied concepts associated with sensory anthropology, namely: kinesthetic schema, bodily mimesis, the mindful body, and local biology. These concepts are used to comprehend how consumers experience sensations phenomenologically, understand them culturally, and reenact them socially.

**Practical Implications**—By acknowledging and engaging the senses, researchers acquire embodied information that would not be evident from conventional interview, survey or experimental data. Sensory anthropology adds to what is known from psychological, social and cultural sources to enable organisations to differentiate their offerings by means of the senses and sensory expressions, not only in yacht and adventure racing but potentially in many other experiential settings, such as travel, shopping, entertainment and immersive gaming.

**Originality/Value**—This article offers distinct and original methodological insights for consumer researchers by focusing on concepts and data collection techniques that assist the study of experiential consumption from an embodied and corporeal perspective.

**Keywords**—experiential consumption, sensory anthropology, senses, multisensory, qualitative methods, embodiment, kinaesthetic schema, bodily mimesis, mindful body, local biology.

**Paper Type**—Research paper

## 1. Introduction

Multisensory experiences are to be found everywhere in contemporary marketing. In recent decades, consumer spending on experiences has boomed (Krishna 2012) and sensory stimulation (Hamilton and Wagner 2014) and embodiment (Vom Lehn 2006) have become central to the patterning of such experiences. The current study is motivated by the growing understanding of sensory stimuli in marketing and consumer research, branding and advertising, retail and service management, and the experience of sport and virtual reality activities (Yoon 2013), but also by the troubling paucity of research tools available to capitalise on the emerging experiential economy (Schmitt 1999). Indeed, the senses are so richly “interwoven in our experiences and form such complex gestalts that taking hold of them in a fully relevant manner is a major research challenge” (Levy 1996, p. 165). Although consumer researchers recognise the significance of understanding sensory stimulation and multisensory experiences, surprisingly little guidance exists on ways to undertake insightful fieldwork (Warren 2008).

Considering its influence on disciplines as diverse as geography and neuroscience, sensory anthropology has much to offer consumer researchers (Pink and Howes 2010; de Waal Malefyt 2015). Sensory anthropology is the study of cultural reactions to sensory outputs, such as dizziness, heart pain and shifts in energy (Hinton and Hinton 2002). It involves the interdisciplinary study of sensations that evoke embodied memories, including how bodies in a particular space and place are imbued with sensations and feelings (Nichter 2008). Underpinning this work is Merleau-Ponty’s (1964) concept of the senses and foundational studies in anthropology (Classen 1997) and sociology (Frisby and Featherstone 1998).

In this article we apply embodiment concepts, derived from sensory anthropology in medicine, to ethnographic fieldwork in consumer research. The approach is grounded in the notion of *embodiment*, which refers to the way the body has a life of its own, such that social worlds become inscribed on and integrated with bodily physiology and experience (Kirmayer 2003). This notion enhances extant research by providing innovative insights that differ from those typically obtained from conventional interviews, surveys and experiments. Because multisensory experiences occur at the site of the body, sensory anthropology provides a legitimate means to deconstruct sensory domains that are continuously shaped by culture, history and geography (de Waal Malefyt 2015). In turn, the notion of embodiment extends to embodied research practices and data collection techniques, notably through the concepts of *kinesthetic schema*, *bodily mimesis*,

*the mindful body* and *local biology*. These concepts most acutely address the qualitative challenges that face consumer research; they fit together in a coherent way and provide a focused theoretical lens for studying embodiment in experiential consumption. The contextual and historical process of embodiment, as cemented in socialisation, gives it an organising authority over the remaining concepts.

Accordingly, this study seeks to: (1) present concepts from sensory anthropology as an embodied approach to studying consumption experiences; (2) outline how consumer researchers can use embodiment concepts to study social practices in experiential consumption; and (3) illustrate how this approach can be applied in practice while highlighting methodological challenges and solutions. These research goals are based on the premise that the senses are experienced phenomenologically, understood culturally, and reenacted socially (Nichter 2008).

Sensory anthropology is not entirely new in consumer research (e.g., Joy and Sherry 2003; Sherry 2006) and Sherry made a strong case for the approach when he remarked that “intersense modalities magnify the impact of the built environment on consumer experience” (Sherry 2006, p. 247). However, this focus is uncommon and seldom has guidance been provided for studying multisensory experience. In general, though marketers and consumer researchers often comment on multisensory experiential consumption, research methods and techniques have not kept pace. Consequently, a gap exists between the consumption of multisensory experiences in daily life and the research tools used to study those experiences (Hulten 2011). Researchers in marketing lack techniques to capture the interrelations, contradictions and wholeness of sensory experiences. In addition, from a consumer viewpoint, people are conditioned to avoid discussing certain bodily phenomena, such that important aspects of embodiment are hidden in daily life and often not revealed to researchers. If consumers are unprepared to speak about their bodies, or lack the language to do so, the effect spreads to the emic level, making it a challenge for researchers to account fully for multisensory experiences in their research processes and narratives.

To address these gaps, our article begins with a definition of sensory anthropology and its relevance for addressing methodological challenges in consumer research. The research settings, data collection procedures, and findings refer to yacht and adventure racing. Finally, implications for consumer research are presented, including suggestions for research across a range of extant and emergent experiential settings. This approach thus responds to calls for a more rigorous

application of qualitative methodologies to develop theory and support more effective decision making (Lee *et al.*, 2005).

## **2. Sensory Anthropology**

Sensory anthropology, with its focus on sociocultural responses to the senses (i.e., sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell), has the power to highlight which senses are central or peripheral in certain contexts and, in taking a more holistic view, examine which sensations are deemed culturally valued (e.g., fitness markers) and those that are not (e.g., pollution). Sensory anthropology entails the study of the social relations of sensory experiences, acknowledging that the sensorial is experienced not only individually but also dynamically and socially.

Nichter (2008) focuses on the merits of sensory anthropology to reveal multisensory ways of knowing. One path to knowing is through sense modalities, meaning a part of a stimulus, or what people perceive following a stimulus. For example, the temperature modality is engaged when states of hot or cold stimulate a receptor (Hinton and Hinton 2002). For medical anthropologists, the relations among parts, such as the way the body is felt in health and sickness, are important in shaping human experience (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987). The body is viewed holistically, not atomistically or dualistically (Bastien 1985b).

To address the research problem – the lack of research concepts and techniques to study multisensory stimulation – this article proposes a framework for thinking about experiential consumption with respect to consumer experience (see Figure 1). At the core is *embodiment*, and extending from it are differing conceptual levels, such that embodiment captures micro (e.g., kinesthetic schema), meso (e.g., bodily mimesis) and macro (e.g., mindful body, local biology) levels of theoretical analysis. This net of concepts establishes an integrated schema which then is available to interrogate the physical, social and cultural life of the body, from the intimate and cellular to the subcultural and sociocultural. By teasing out the micro, meso and macro layers of embodiment, this study offers a widely applicable and practical framework for approaching the challenges of consumer research.

Insert Figure 1

### *2.1 Embodiment*

### *Definition*

Embodiment refers to the lived experience of a person's body, as well as the experience of life mediated through the body (Appadurai 1996). Much of human life exists in non-cognitive inner worlds (Vom Lehn 2006), where social and environmental worlds become inscribed on the body's physiology and experience. Embodiment collapses the traditional duality between mind and body and can transgress into shared embodiment between people (Kimmel 2008). In phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty (1962) uses embodiment to come to terms with bodily experiences. His notion of "knowing without knowing" challenges the Cartesian viewpoint by showing how people's relationship with their bodies transcends both subject and object (e.g., a person can move around a familiar shop without conscious thought).

Though much about embodiment relates to the non-cognitive world, most academic consumer research has focused on cognition (Thrift 2000). There are exceptions, with several published consumer research studies focused on embodiment (e.g., Dion *et al.*, 2011; Canniford and Shankar 2013; Scott *et al.*, 2017), but in general there is a paucity of methodological guidance as to how to study embodiment. The current research conceives of using biologically and socially wired elements to activate qualitative inquiry, delving into the non-cognitive as much as the cognitive. Equipped in this way, ethnographers can articulate multisensory experiences and reach a level of depth and richness not typically achieved with conventional research techniques.

### *Usage in Fieldwork*

Embodiment collapses the dualities between mind and body, and subject and object (Csordas 1990); this non-dualistic treatment helps ethnographers capitalise on the body as a site for knowledge in substantive, conceptual and methodological realms. Many medical anthropologists deem it essential to trust their bodies and read sensations as signs of interaction between the properties of substances and their bodily states, alongside other information they may have such as physiological measurements.

By engaging in immersive bodily practices, ethnographers can embody multisensory experiences in the field and reorient their personal awareness by scrutinising and focusing on actions as they unfold (Thrift 2000). For instance, Nichter (2008) learned to take in the essence of the land of his field studies through the consumption of locally grown rice, vegetables, and milk from local cows. He regarded this embodiment of place as essential to his transformation, like a plant learning to adapt to new soil. Ethnographers must remain vigilant to detect sensory registers,

receptors and muscular modalities. Their attention to flesh, emotions, embodied metaphors, diet and body language can enhance their embodied knowing. By engaging in the same practices as participants (e.g., similar postures, repetitive movements, spatial juxtapositions), they achieve heightened sensory empathy and knowledge (Thrift 2000). Thus, when ethnographers walk, eat, sleep and travel with participants, their experiences validate the effects on their bodies (e.g., on digestion).

Embodiment is important for framing our understanding of consumer research as it transcends the mind/body dualism of Cartesian thinking (Lock 1993). By rejecting dualism and conceptualising the body as a site of experience, rather than a mere object, researchers can focus on the body as an active being that interrogates the world around it through embodied mastery (Crossley 1995). This point speaks to the physical, social and cultural life of the body, with significance at the micro, meso and macro levels of analysis. This net of concepts provides a corporeal frame to comprehend experiences, where the body is a prominent feature.

## *2.2 Kinesthetic Schema (micro-level analysis)*

### *Definition*

A kinesthetic schema is a micro-level concept that considers how body positioning, movement, force and balance influence individual experience. The micro-articulations of the body in an encounter fix affect, mood, emotions and feelings (Pink and Howes 2010). The concept draws attention to valuable anthropological discourses regarding the way the body is situated and helps reveal *being in the world* and *body awareness*. This approach highlights awareness of the position of one's body parts, movement and the force needed for movement (proprioception). It also pertains to kinesthesia, body displacement, balance, joint position, such that it transcends the limitations of a conventional model of the five senses (Kimmel 2008). In addition, the kinesthetic schema provides an awareness of the head's orientation in relation to gravity and informs movement, acceleration, rotation, up and down, and side to side (equilibrioception).

### *Usage in Fieldwork*

Recording internal bodily phenomena, changes in posture, skin and deep tissue stimulation make the kinesthetic schema useful to researchers exploring physical consumer contexts. For example, the processing of balance is multisensory (Angelaki and Cullen 2008), which has important implications for various experiences: zorbing, slacklining and acroyoga to name a few. The schema

also has relevance for emergent physical encounters such commercial space flight where fast and lethargic processing of perceived orientation and self-motion take place at different times of the encounter (Barnett-Cowan 2013). The spatial localisation of auditory and visual stimuli processing also contribute to body orientation in different ways. The insights gathered from this experience can be used to inform more everyday consumption settings in which gravitational acceleration acts upon the body.

This notion of “attending to feeling within the body” makes the kinesthetic schema critical to accessing previously unreachable forms of data (Kimmel 2008, p. 4). This is particularly valuable when participants find it difficult to communicate their physical orientation. In such cases, the researcher can ask participants to expand on their awareness of their own bodies: “Did you feel there was an imbalance? Were you dizzy? Light headed?” The technique produces rich material about sensory feelings and perceptions, vomiting centres, weightlessness and body tilt.

### *2.3 Bodily Mimesis (meso-level analysis)*

#### *Definition*

Mimesis is a mirroring of social and visceral correspondences; it is to become and behave like something else (Taussig 1993). Bodily mimesis occurs when an observer copies another person’s bodily actions. At the meso level, the experiences and interactions between groups of bodies are studied. The process is associated with favouring familiar sense-states (Nichter 2008), including movement, heartbeat and breathing. During mimesis, sensory mapping occurs between kinesthetic experience and exteroception (Zlatev 2008), as shown by facial expressions, “do as I do” imitation, shared attention, body synchronisation, and even mirroring organs (e.g., using the vocal tract). Mimesis can be applied broadly in people’s lives to deconstruct various bodily actions; for example, pharmaceutical drugs can produce bodily states that synchronise with work routines. Ethnographers may use mimesis to describe resonance among the mind, emotions and body, as well as to interlink the cognitive, the affective and the bodily in experiences (Kirmayer 1992).

#### *Usage in Fieldwork*

Bodily mimesis is useful for studying people who occupy similar social and physical niches across places and spaces. Mimesis has been used to navigate the shared social mimicry of thousands of supporters in English football culture, for example. Inside stadiums, researchers embody, share and mirror supporters’ sensory modalities by appearing in club colours and singing in unison the



club's name (e.g., "Chelsea, Chelsea"). There also is a unique mimic vibration in music that leads to a mind-body continuum (Nichter 2008). By embodying and staying alert to their own sensory experiences, as well as observing those of others, researchers can capture social (e.g., singing) and visceral (e.g., rising for a goal) correspondences.

#### *2.4 The Mindful Body (macro-level analysis)*

##### *Definition*

People are endowed with an integrated mind and body (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987). During sickness, or in moments of deep trance or sexual transport, the mind and body, the self and other, become one — the mindful body. Mind and body are connected through sensory modalities. As ethnographers, it is challenging to investigate the integrated mind and body and to determine how this fusion helps people make sense of their worlds. Invariably, people face the challenge of lacking the necessary symbols, vocabulary, tools and concepts to probe this mindful body (Lock and Dunk 1987). Yet rich metaphors can become more accessible to researchers through the mindful body (Douglas 1966). For example, the human organism and its composition of milk, blood, tears and excreta “may be used as a cognitive map to represent other natural, supernatural, social and even spatial relations” (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, p. 19). In this respect, culture is a banal solution to the human condition that rests on a base of guts, sex and energy — elements rarely explored (or even mentioned) in consumer research. The extension from the mindful body to the social patterning of human experience places this concept at the macro level of enquiry.

##### *Usage in Fieldwork*

Medical anthropologists frequently encounter symbolic equations between the healthy body and a healthy society and the diseased body and a malfunctioning society (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987). The idea can be applied to an array of consumer research. For example, the epidemic of depression is a social health issue for mental health workers in the Western world. This concept can help researchers examine links between experiential consumption practices surrounding the health or illness of the individual body and the social body.

Another mindful body example originates from the Qollahuaya Andean Indians' personal and social body concepts (Bastien 1985a, p. 598). Qollahuayas understand their bodies in terms of the mountain and the mountain in terms of their own anatomies. Both are seen as comprising interrelated parts: head, chest, heart and stomach. The mountain, like the body, must be nourished

to stay strong and healthy. Researchers might invoke this analogy when considering how people understand their own bodies. For example, customers who test drive a Mercedes may describe the car as agile, quiet and thirsty, reflecting their own sensations of self while driving the car. The ethnographer might then extrapolate from these metaphors to understand the wider, mindful body.

## *2.5 Local Biology (macro-level analysis)*

### *Definition*

Local biology helps ethnographers observe biology and culture as part of a continuous feedback loop. The body can be conceptualised as an active agent in the relationship between culture and biology (Lock 1993). The impact of genetics, diet and lived sensory experiences are central to local biology and the study of macrosocial patterns. For example, the local biology of consumers engaged in canyoning or skydiving may act as a response to declining levels of physical activity in the Western world (Le Breton 1999).

Local biology is valuable to researchers who work with the patterns created by culturally infused knowledge (Lock 1998); ethnographers can capture variations in psychological, social and cultural behaviours interwoven into a biological base. In turn, these researchers can be more sensitive and thoughtful in unpacking rich but unstable bodily discourses and changing life cycles. For example, many domains of health consumption, such as the impact of Eastern and Western medicines on their respective societies, might be worth exploring through local biology.

### *Usage in Fieldwork*

Local biology acknowledges the centrality of the physical body to the interrelationship of culture and biology. Consider the British who colonised India: they ruled the subcontinent, explored, collected, organised and administered, yet they mostly did not integrate with the land; embodying, not just observing or studying, the foundations of culture is vital (Nichter 2008). Local biology also can be used to strengthen modes of embodiment, mimesis and the mindful body. If the ethnographer's body is synchronised with the bodies of the study participants, an empathetic understanding can stimulate a more complete analysis. Although a primary goal of ethnography is immersion in life worlds, the researcher often remains an outsider (Emerson *et al.*, 2011). Local biology helps to minimise the distance between ethnographers and the worlds they study.

## **3. Research Settings**

Military-style adventure racing and ocean yacht racing present reservoirs of multisensory assemblages. These forms of racing stimulate and enliven the senses, providing contexts for investigating the translation of concepts from sensory anthropology to consumer research.

Pioneering adventure race, Tough Mudder (“Mudder”), typically comprises a 20-kilometre assault course and 25 military-style obstacles that immerse participants in fire, icy water, mud and electricity. The resulting increase in participants’ blood pressure, heart rates and sensory alertness, often caused by fear or pain, provides a rich sensory arena for multisensory exploration.

Ocean yacht racing displays an intense variety of multisensory interactions: motion sickness; ocean storms; the forces of wind, tide and swell; and sleep deprivation. Few activities so completely remove people from their familiar sensory environment. Yachting demands a high level of sensory vigilance from sailors, usually with them having to encounter and confront unfamiliar and challenging embodied sensations.

#### **4. Data Collection**

From 2011 to 2015 a wide range of ethnographic techniques were deployed to engage the senses in each of the two contexts (Table I). Ethnography at the site of the body (e.g., participant observation) allowed us to unearth meanings associated with the senses. As researchers, we learned to use our senses as well as our minds (Nichter 2008). We focused on the techniques that were most useful for generating sensory data and observed bodily processes before, during and after events that enliven the senses. For example, the ability to walk, sit and run with participants created affinity, empathy and belonging. In this study, running, swimming and crawling with Mudders, and balancing, twisting, pulling and rocking with sailors, helped us share and embody the step, style and rhythm of others. This social sharing of living and moving also helped us understand the multisensory nature of these experiences.

Because speech, body language and gestures are important for meaning making, the lead researcher remained conscious of sensory modalities during interviews with racing participants. She moved beyond observable forms of human interaction to understand how interviewer and interviewee can create a shared place (Pink 2009), through activities such as sharing an iPad during photoelicitation (Heisley and Levy 1991). For interviews, participants were invited to bring everything they needed to communicate their experience: photos, recordings, notes and artefacts. Visual and digital sources were relevant for the sensory focus; although audiovisual methods do

not provide a complete record of the senses, they can evoke memories (Pink 2009). By combining a variety of media for multisensory ethnographic representation, this research juxtaposes different but complementary types of knowledge, subjectivity, epistemology and voice.

In the adventure racing community, participant observation took place at four Mudder event locations, in four distinct roles: as a crowd member (Scotland, 2012), team participant (Sydney, 2012), staff volunteer (Sydney, 2013) and individual participant (Las Vegas, 2015). To match the richness of the data gathered from the sailors, the lead researcher also lived with two Mudders for nine months. In this setting, data flowed continuously from informants who behaved in natural ways that could not be captured by videos or interviews (Belk *et al.*, 1988). Thus, we obtained a more expansive record of conversational episodes and obtained ideas and images that otherwise would not have been accessible. For example, perceptions of Tough Mudder were revealed during a participant's conversation with family members over Skype.

The lead researcher also spent five months immersed in the Sydney sailing community (2011), allowing inferences and themes to develop from participant observation. Later that year, she spent four weeks training for the Pittwater to Coffs Harbour Regatta, followed by four days of racing off the eastern seaboard of Australia. The lead researcher also lived with two sailors for seven months in Sydney. These sailors, Neil and Russell, combined over 60 years of international sailing experience; they encompassed metaphors and meanings that an outside researcher would likely overlook. This compounded immersion in the yachting community allowed for spontaneity and multi-layered interpretations (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). For example, after a day of survival training, Neil recalled stories that he might not have remembered during an interview. By living with Neil and Russell, the researcher could challenge research assumptions and apply a more actualised understanding of the phenomenon.

Data collection and analysis were guided by emergent design and iterative procedures (Geertz 1988). We continually analysed the data as they were being collected, searching for emerging themes that would reveal a multitude of perspectives (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2000). Interview transcripts were coded into specific, and then into broader, categories. Finally, we used transcripts as a field guide.

Insert Table I

## **5. Findings: Sensing Experiential Consumption**

The presentation of the findings begins with embodiment, followed by its facets, to support a holistic analysis. Each section begins with examples from adventure racing, followed by yacht racing. Illustrating the application of the embodied concepts with ethnographic data thus provides consumer researchers with insights into how to use the concepts in experiential settings.

### *5.1 Embodiment*

The Mudder participant Mike details how his body is confused by the multiple sensations on the adventure course. He expresses how the electrical pulses (touch) caused a new way for him to manage consciousness, space and direction, which in turn has an impact on his other senses:

“The electric, that just destroyed me. I went to charge through and I got struck. I don’t remember what happened, I got knocked out; I fell like a dead body to the ground ... Then I came out and the guy [volunteer] put the orange headband on me, and I was a bit dazed. He said, ‘Are you alright man?’ and I said ‘Yes’, but I wasn’t.” (Mike; Mudder)

Mike’s experience is consistent with the altered state of consciousness experienced by clubbers, which Goulding and colleagues (2009, p. 764) describe as “a multisensual, highly emotional, extralinguistic, stimulus-response-like state that suggests that reflective cognitive processes are temporarily inactivated.” This bodily understanding is possible because of visceral sensations. As Mike’s teammate, the researcher shared an embodied synergy with the participant that was activated by the painful shocks. Although Mike did not communicate his true feelings to others (event volunteers), the teammate/lead researcher gained a deeper level of insight through the sharing of sensory experiences. Sensory ethnographers thus might adopt multiple embodied roles as participant observers (e.g., teammates, volunteers, spectators) to experience micro-level bodily conditions.

The participants also evaluated the qualities and meanings of their sensory experiences, including the smells, movements, sights, textures and sounds at the Mudder starting pen. When the pen is full, volunteers rotate the speakers so that music is blasted at the participants (sound). Teams are tightly packed and instructed to kneel on the ground to make their pledge (touch). High walls surround the pen, leaving only the start line visible (sight). Playing music, managing the crowd and photographers, and being a Mudder in the pen at a previous event helped the lead researcher engage in this shared sensory medley (Kimmel 2008). The start-line playlist for the Sydney 2013 event included:

ACDC, “Hells Bells”: “I’m rolling thunder, pouring rain, I’m coming on like a hurricane. My lightening’s flashing across the sky. You’re only young, but you’re gonna die.”

The music altered the rhythm of breathing and heart rate in the Mudders’ bodies, inducing visceral states and embodied feelings of sweat, nausea and fear. Only by being in a team of Mudders could the researcher share these stimuli; if she had not been in the team of volunteers at the start-line and united in the embodied process of implementing the backstage sensory production line, she would not have been able to understand the experience in its “wholeness” — with significant interconnections and interrelations — rather than in its parts.

Similarly, embodying the sensations of the sailing crew while eating meals was a critical diagnostic indicator of our participant’s multisensory experiences:

“I was sitting shoulder-to-shoulder with my crew on the rail of our boat when my first meal, pasta Bolognese, was handed to me ... It was only when the wind blew my lunch across my teammate’s coat that I saw the value. Most annoyingly, intermittent waves would cover us, drenching our food in seawater.” (Field notes; Sailing)

Adverse weather conditions onboard the yacht elicited unconventional eating practices. The lead researcher tasted and ingested the sea. She saw how consumption patterns and routines can bring unspoken meanings to the fore (e.g., the importance of hydration for the safety of the crew). Through embodied socialisation, she learned to adjust her eating techniques to principles taught by the crew (e.g., eating with one’s face sunk into the bowl) and the environment (e.g., waiting for breaking waves before eating). It was a first step in becoming accepted by the crew and habituated to the place and her personal sensory apparatus.

The implications from our research in turn can be integrated with extant studies to produce a schema for understanding multisensory experiences. Table II summarises the schema for embodiment, it also highlights the techniques that help with the elaboration of this concept, summarises insights from the fieldwork, offers practical examples from this study, and suggests another example which shows how the approach might be extended to other consumer behaviour contexts.

Insert Table II

## *5.2 Kinesthetic Schema*

The kinesthetic schema implicates the bodily orientation. The lead researcher recounts going through the electroshock therapy obstacle, which involves participants running through a cluster of live electric wires:

“ ‘AUHHHH’, a loud sickening noise I didn’t recognise as my own comes out of my mouth from deep in my abdomen.... The cracking electrical pulses hamper the flow of my run. After two shocks, I feel like my knee and ankle joints have turned into soft putty ... As my knees begin to buckle, my quads and hamstrings twitch and twist redirecting my feet causing them to waver and snake forwards.” (Field notes; Mudder)

By wearing a GoPro camera on her head, the lead researcher could document precisely where her extremities were. Ordinarily, memory of an intense experience is only partial; by using cameras attached to their bodies, ethnographers can remain cognisant of their body parts, movements and senses — data that otherwise would have been obscured or forgotten. Nerve endings, joint density and blood flow all can be scrutinised to help comprehend the experience of electric shocks. By making one’s body vulnerable during auto-ethnography, researchers can observe disorientation and the disruption of movement control.

Drawing from kinesthetic schema in the context of extreme heat, ethnographers also can report on detailed episodes of embodied phenomena:

“My breath is prickly in the heat and laboured. My mouth is open to generate cooling from my ragged inhale into my sweating face. I lean my body forward as I jog. My arms are neatly bent to help my torso cool.” (Field notes; Mudder)

Using the lens of the kinesthetic schema, adaptive bodily changes that occur to maintain function thus can be analysed more readily. For example, the sensation of breath as it enters and leaves the body is evident in the heat, because normal breathing gives way to open-mouthed inhalation. The stance and posture of the body shifts, tilting forward to ease the onward running movement, and compensatory arm movements conserve energy. These perceptions may inform organisations that seek to facilitate experiences in similar settings. The processes may go largely unnoticed by participants, but the body camera enabled awareness of the kinesthetic schema, helping the ethnographer focus on new discoveries and problems caused by extreme heat.

Next, Dylan is faced with a gravitational challenge at sea with respect to an elevated embodied schema:

“We were in the middle of a really big storm ... the skipper said you need to climb to the top of the mast and slide down the forestay [a piece of standing rigging that keeps the mast

from falling backwards]. You're eight foot in the air, it's pitch black, straight into the rain, the boat is getting thrown around." (Dylan; Sailing)

With a kinesthetic schema, it is possible to analyse Dylan's experience at a more granular level. When his body is eight feet up a mast, over rolling waves, the weight of his body and the forces acting on it feel greater than normal. His muscles, pulling against gravity, are undergoing contractions, and shifts in his visual and auditory localization have a destabilising influence on his balance and body orientation. Dylan's postural stabilisation becomes challenged, as does his limited limb configuration. In the darkness, on a wet forestay, the force he applies to achieve precision touch and precision grip stop him from falling. The positioning of body weight can facilitate acceleration too:

"All crew are hanging over the rail to maximise boat speed. This makes a huge impact on speed, to the extent that many of us would be resting our whole body-weight on the windward rail [the side of the boat the wind hits]." (Field notes; Sailing)

Normal vertical body orientation is ineffective onboard a racing yacht, which sails at approximately 45 degrees. When crew members lean off the rail though, their body weight works with the force of wind and waves to propel the boat forward, while also producing a raw body experience that, over prolonged periods of time, can induce motion sickness. Although the same force applies to all bodies on the rail, individual susceptibilities to motion vary; symptoms include eyestrain and nausea. Torso changes from vertical to tilted are also useful in signalling body orientation in aircrafts (Rupert 2000). Table III summarises this kinesthetic schema.

Insert Table III

### 5.3 Bodily Mimesis

Throughout our fieldwork, we aimed to understand the process whereby social and corporeal correspondences mirror each other. Jess describes anticipation of fluctuating temperatures in the Arctic Enema obstacle (Image I):

"You had to go under the water, and just looking at people's faces they were just like 'gaaaah.' Couldn't really move (laughs). I remember when I used to go surfing in New Zealand in the winter time, you'd duck dive, and you get underneath the water, and you'd get an instant ice headache." (Jess; Mudder)



**Image I.** Tough Mudder Arctic Enema Obstacle



Jess experienced a corporeal response that emulated her prior experience in New Zealand. The memorable bodily disposition resonated in her flesh and stimulated her senses. These assaults facilitated a physical renaissance of the body; the cold water stimulated the release of mood-boosting endorphins and activated sensory nerves leading to the brain (Shevchuk 2008). The use of mimesis in body language, voice tone and running pace allowed our lead researcher to socially contextualise Jess's response.

In the sailing community, Richard's ocean experience reflected an alternative expression of mimesis:

"A place to reconnect with the natural world, to realize who we are. That's what nature's about, what we really are. We aren't really rock stars, or high-powered corporate types."  
(Richard; Sailing)

Mimesis involves a pattern of organised actions, which served to remobilise Richard's rhythm with nature. The lead researcher spent days sharing the same moves, steps and sways of the ocean and weather. By matching sensory modalities and being attuned to the forces of the ocean, it was possible to tap into the embodied responses that resist cognitive contemplation. The narrative of non-discursive symbols, the interlocking of bodily, sociocultural and psychological processes, facilitated this insight and added another layer of understanding of why particular spaces associated with sensational states are favoured.

Airflow roused the senses and conjoined the spatial organization of the crew with the ethnographer on the Pittwater to Coffs Harbour Regatta:

“The first night, it’s gonna be rough, so we need everybody to sleep on the rail. So we have to work hard together, as soon as the breeze backs off, or we have calm, eight people go and sleep. Go and get some energy back.” (Carl; Sailing)

In strong winds, the crew slept outside on the rail of the boat (physical mirroring); they experienced different tastes, touch, noises and aesthetics than they did when sleeping inside. Body odour was a common smell inside the yacht, yet outside it was dissipated by the sea breeze. Personal smells were soon associated with the crew’s sense of shared community (olfactory mirroring). The enduring nature of being at sea drained the sensory facilities of the lead researcher and crew. Sleep deprivation for three nights was the most challenging aspect of the fieldwork. Table IV summarises mimesis.

Insert Table IV

#### *5.4 The Mindful Body*

The integration of mind, body, self and other became apparent in the Arctic Enema obstacle. After jumping into icy water, participants’ muscles went rigid, yet they still had to swim through the ice and pull themselves out before becoming hypothermic:

“I’ve never had the physical experience when my mind has been so alert, but my body just cramps up and it’s quite surprising when my body reacts in such a useless fashion to such adverse conditions. I don’t know. You hear about people whose bodies turn into supermen and I’ve discovered mine was a piece of shit.” (Kim; Mudder)

Kim’s body let her down when exposed to adverse temperature fluctuations. A disconnect of mind, body, self and other occurred — a breakdown of the mindful body. The lead researcher empathised with Kim’s experience by sharing her own encounter of a similar mindful body breakdown that led her to lose her contact lenses. The sharing of sensory traumas between ethnographer and participant shows the merit of using the body as an information tool to understand visceral states at a more intimate level.

Marcus discussed the value of multisensory awareness for experiencing a mindful body:

“The tunnel was a good one ‘cause you didn’t know how long it was. It was pitch black in there so the sensation of the unknown I suppose is exciting.... It was funny, I was physically drained, but mentally really alert.” (Marcus; Mudder)

Marcus detailed the inseparability of his mind, body and self in the darkness. Being physically drained but mentally alert reinforces the Cartesian representation of the body and mind as discrete entities, and yet they must operate together for Marcus to make sense of his experience. Bodily movements and functions that ordinarily receded into the background of his consciousness now summoned his attention.

The following interview excerpts show the empirical insight gained from using sensory anthropology compared with traditional interview approaches. Interview 1 reflects a traditional approach with the elicited response; Interview 2 reveals the implications of asking a sensorial question:

*Interview 1*

“I: Looking back on the experience, how would you describe Tough Mudder?”

N: I’m glad we did it. We could have prepared better as a team to make us more team-like, because we hadn’t trained as a team, we hadn’t built up a team bond, other than what exists naturally.” (Nick; Mudder)

*Interview 2*

“I: Looking back on the experience, if your body could talk, how would it describe the sensory aspect of Tough Mudder?”

N: When it came to the obstacles my brain kind of shut out the pain and what was going on when I was going through the obstacle. So I was just determined to finish the obstacle. So I was in that mode of just doing it. It wasn’t until afterwards I thought I was like, ‘Oh I’ve got sore knees ‘cause I went on rocks, or I scraped my arm’.” (Nick; Mudder)

In Interview 2, the objective was to explore the way participants discussed the merging of mind, body, self and other. We were concerned with the sensory categories people use when evaluating and reflecting. If we had not asked the question with a sensory focus to understand human perception, we would not have ascertained different sensory perceptions of the same experience.

Carl described how the sea breeze affected his hearing and sense of smell when sailing:

“I’m very sensitive to the breeze on my face and when I steer, I can almost steer blindfolded and feel the breeze on my face. You are sensitive to sounds. If something breaks, or you hear a big bang, you want to know what it is.” (Carl; Sailing)

Carl’s mind, body, self and other (yacht) were integrated with his environment. His senses were attuned to the task at hand; sensory alertness was required. The interlacing of all the senses was so powerful that Carl no longer needed his sight. Mind and body merged in energetic pathways of continuity and interconnectivity. We observed this level of mindfulness in other highly experienced sailors, describing it as a form of the multisensory self-actualisation reached after

years of sensory vigilance. The ability to converse with sailors about this level of integrated awareness was made possible through the researcher training her reflexive mindful body. Richard also described how his senses anticipated the challenges of a gale at sea:

“I felt like my senses were working overtime, trying to anticipate waves. Trying to keep the boat moving slowly, but it was very hard because we couldn’t see very much. Trying to be as sensitive to what was going on around me as I could. But it was like being a blind person.” (Richard; Sailing)

Richard’s senses functioned as a locus of strength that mobilised his survival. He used the metaphor of “being like a blind person” to explain his reliance on his remaining senses. Research shows some blind people mentally replace colours with sounds (Merleau-Ponty 1964). More generally, through a metaphor the ethnographer can observe a mindful self that stands apart from the body. The implication is the importance of understanding how mind, body, self and other function together, even when depleted, to manage changing environments. Table V summarises the mindful body.

Insert Table V

### *5.5 Local Biology*

Local biology depicts the feedback loop between human biology and culture (Lock 1993). At Tough Mudder, the lead researcher explained what happened when her sight was compromised:

“I lost my contact lenses at the second obstacle ... this compelled me to tune my remaining senses to find my teammate. As I couldn’t see him, I had to rely on him hearing me [by calling his name], as we got through obstacles with hundreds of other Mudders. Not being able to see was frightening.... I had to touch my environment more because I couldn’t rely on my vision to problem-solve.” (Field notes; Mudder)

When sight is privileged, only a fraction of the somatic experience is acquired. Local biology, along with an altered sense of space and place, compromised the researcher’s perception of the course. On the obstacle course, bodily sensations were shared in a visceral way. For example, it was challenging for the local biology of a Westernized body to manage the local culture of mud immersion. In comparison, peoples from non-Western cultures may react differently to mud for socio-cultural-religious reasons.

Through local biology insights are gained by becoming vulnerable to the ebbs and flows of the world under study. We observed how the body is an active agent in the dynamic interrelationship between culture and biology:

“The idea of crawling through a dark tunnel under ground was not too compelling. I didn’t feel comfortable with the weight of the earth above my head and hundreds of people running over it. At the end of the suffocating, tight, clay mud tunnel, you’re greeted by water up to your neck.” (Field notes; Mudder)

These field notes detailed the fear and discomfort during sensory impairment/realignment. The researcher’s sense of sight — already impaired by the loss of contact lenses — disappears in the tunnel. In Western culture, sight is privileged; its loss sends the Western body into disarray. In addition, her sense of smell was removed as she exited the tunnel through the water (Image II). And under the water, sound was compromised, heightening her senses of taste and touch.

**Image II.** Tough Mudder Boa Constrictor Obstacle



Riley exemplified the link between biology and the local culture in the context of sailing:

“There was one point where we were changing a sail and there was green wash [dense ocean waves] crashing over the bow, not white, green. I was clipped on with my lifeline. The water came over and covered me completely.” (Riley; Sailing)

In this vignette, the culture of the ocean acted on Riley’s biological need to breathe amid the green wash. His body was an active agent in the violent relationship between material culture and biology. Our lead researcher spent days with Riley at sea. Their shared mimicking and embodying experiences meant Riley spoke to and interacted with the researcher as someone who was within his feedback loop of biology and culture.

The darkness of night at sea also prompted a unique conversation between culture and biology:

“At night it was challenging to cross from one side of a violently sailing yacht to another with no sleep ... In one attempt to cross, I fell and winded myself. Unable to breathe for a time, I was placed in a bunk with frozen food on my back and plied with painkillers.” (Field notes; Sailing)

Sight impairment disorients participants because vision is regarded as the ideal sense for intellectualised, information-focused Western cultures that have withdrawn from many other areas of sensation. The physically challenging reality of being on a yacht meant the lead researcher had a strong biological affinity with the historically maddening experience of suffering an injury at sea. Table VI summarises local biology.

Insert Table VI

## 6. Discussion

This article (1) presents concepts from sensory anthropology as a holistic and embodied approach for studying experiential consumption; (2) outlines how consumer researchers can use embodiment and facets of embodiment (i.e., the kinesthetic schema, bodily mimesis, the mindful body and local biology) to study social practices in the consumption of experiences; and (3) illustrates how this approach can be applied in the face of methodological and data collection challenges. The data from yacht and adventure racing offer valuable insights for consumer researchers, revealing information that would not be accessible through more conventional approaches. For example, by exploring sensory modalities, we observe how manipulating and confusing consumers’ senses in an activity such as Tough Mudder creates a distinctive multisensory encounter that would be difficult for competing experience providers to emulate.

Embodiment provides a conceptual launch pad to uncover untold consumption stories by generating corporeal knowledge about how people sense, feel, think, act and relate (Schmitt 1999). Because fieldwork is an embodied activity, embodiment acts as a gateway to kinesthetic schema, bodily mimesis, the mindful body and local biology. A detailed analysis of the participant’s and the researcher’s embodied experience facilitates learning and knowing, situated in embodied practice. The interconnections among the senses are important, because rather than traveling along separate pathways, the senses interact (Cytowic 2010). A multisensory approach presents sensory stimulation as a form of embodiment, where meaning is taken into, or upon, the body. Such embodied meaning may be very important in daily life; for instance, heightened sensual responses

to brands are likely to elicit deeper relations with products and services and might drive exceptional product purchase and brand loyalty (de Waal Malefyt 2015).

Researchers can apply these concepts and techniques to a range of experiential marketing settings, from travel to immersive gaming, with the expectation that there will be both conceptual and commercial gains. For example, while some people pay to engage in yacht and adventure racing, others pay to engage in live kidnappings, an experience that is simultaneously thrilling and frightening. A way to understand commercialised kidnappings is through kinesthetic schema. By documenting the shifts in body orientation, and the disorientated spatial localisation of the participant's auditory and visual stimuli, it is possible to obtain detailed information about *feeling within the body* that may otherwise be overlooked.

More mainstream examples can be found in the travel industry, such as the aim of Thai Airways to deliver unforgettable travel experiences. The airline has embodied the concept of *ayatana*, the six senses of sight, taste, smell, hearing, touch and feelings from the heart. The multisensory sentiment is part of Thai Airway's mission to redefine every traveller's flight experiences (Kim 2014). Researchers could use embodiment to cover all the sensory touch points that travellers encounter: advertisements, social media, airport lounges and onboard food. This approach requires vigilance to detect all sensory registers and engagement in shared practices, postures, repetitive movements and spatial juxtapositions through all stages of the travel experience. If researchers can embody Thai culture outside the travel sphere and translate this embodied knowledge back to the airline, the organization could gain more nuanced forms of sensory representation. Researchers might photograph or wear Thai fashion; these embodied practices could inform the touch, colour, style and feel of new crew uniforms. Travellers would begin to embody Thai culture and understand its sensory modalities prior to arrival at their destination.

Another pertinent setting is immersive gaming. The latest generation of Sony, Microsoft, and Nintendo video gaming consoles, and Oculus Rift virtual reality headsets, suggests innovative manufacturers have a vested interest in understanding the sensory appeal of their consoles and headsets as a vehicle for engaging consumers in gaming experiences. Insights from living with gamers and immersion in the local biology of the gamer would be of potential value to manufacturers. Because local biology works with culturally infused knowledge to pattern the feedback loop between biology and culture, it may be possible to spot the sensations lacking in a

cross-country driving game or determine which vibrations make gunshots sound more realistic in a desert-setting game. Potentially, sensory anthropology facilitates the early identification of valued and idiosyncratic sensations in the 3D gaming marketplace and therefore represents a commercial opportunity. Though our article focuses on physical experiences, similar techniques might be applied in virtual fields. Physical fields may seem more viscerally authentic, compared with wearing 3D glasses or headsets, but advances in immersive gaming are raising the question of whether a consumer really needs to “be there” to have a fulsome sensory experience.

Throughout this study, the body functions as a distinctive site for research and observation. The body is self-evidently present in sensory fieldwork such as mountain climbing (Loewenstein 1999) or tattooing (Patterson and Schroeder 2010). In other settings (schools, gyms, armies), bodies are regulated, managed, and disciplined (Shilling 2012). Sensory anthropology, therefore, can be seen to allow for diverse spatial, verbal and presentational dimensions of consumer stimulation (kinesthetic schema).

Using multisensory techniques and analyses also raises new issues and considerations for consumer research. Sensory anthropology has taught us to look not only at positive or negative, intense or dull, and interconnected or compensatory sensations, but also to notice how limited sensations can be in some commercial and consumption settings – to the detriment of all who inhabit these environments. By contrast, organizations that have mastered the art of playing, manipulating and confusing people’s senses are like successful music composers who use an orchestration of notes (senses) to create a distinctive sensation (a memorable experience). These interpretations enable researchers to understand how people make sense of their worlds. Which sensory qualities enliven various consumption domains such as a florist (e.g., colours, textures and smells) or a toy shop (oral and tactile engagement)? Insights from sensory anthropology equip marketers to imagine and design sense-rich experiences and to do so in a holistic way.

As explained in the introduction, sensory anthropology is not entirely new to consumer research and how to understand the immanence of an in-to-body experience is an ongoing challenge (Sherry 2006). But consumer research could do more to explore how we sense, feel and perceive the body; it could examine how embodiment interacts with our physical environments. Through such examination, researchers would be able to identify what types of embodiment are relevant to specific questions and themes, thereby enhancing physiological, social, emotional and corporeal sources of multisensory experience.



Also, important to acknowledge is that the embodiment concepts and facets discussed in this article do not form an exhaustive list. For instance, there is scope for future research to explore techniques for participant-led drawing and photography to generate sensory data about consumption experiences. What we have seen in this article is that marketing research currently lacks the vocabulary, concepts and tools to probe multisensory experiences fully, but sensory anthropology is available to offer help and guidance. The senses have wide-reaching relevance across interdisciplinary fields (Pink and Howes 2010) and researchers interested in experiential marketing should be attentive to prior studies that examine the senses, particularly those that consider the senses holistically (Ingold 2000; Krishna 2006).

Ethnographic techniques developed in sensory anthropology hold considerable promise for complementing dominant marketing research and data collection methods. By analogy, a medical doctor draws on a variety of techniques to understand a patient's physiology, including heart rate and electrocardiogram readings, hearing and balance assessments, muscle tension and neuronal activity readings, skin resistance and skin temperature studies, as well as interview and observation. In adopting a suite of techniques to elicit insights, rather than relying on a single approach or a single piece of information, the consumer researcher is approaching multisensory investigation in a somewhat similar way.

## **7. Conclusion**

The current article extends consumer research by focussing on concepts and data collection methods for delving into multisensory experiences. Alongside Cayla and Arnould's (2013) study, which details the value of ethnography for market learning, our article demonstrates the merits of sensory ethnography for experiential consumer research. Researchers can apply these concepts and methods to examine multiple sensory touch points and detect interrelated sensory registers: practices, postures, repetitive movements and spatial juxtapositions. Although sensory marketing is a well-established practice, we believe more can be done to leverage it; consumer researchers can adopt a more holistic and embodied approach to research, thereby helping firms to better understand, craft and deliver their multisensory offerings, and helping consumers to participate in more enriching, fulfilling and exciting experiences.

Traditionally, researchers have tended to consider the senses in isolation from one another, sometimes privileging one over another (e.g. the visual over the sense of smell). If this practice

continues, it is unlikely that a full appreciation of experiential consumption will be obtained. A sensorial approach to ethnography acts as a powerful existential phenomenological tool, by providing valuable insights into the body as a site for experience. It contrasts with the focus on the psychological, cultural and social explored in prior consumer research. By exploring embodiment and the concepts of kinesthetic schema, bodily mimesis, the mindful body and local biology, researchers can create densely textured studies, analyses and insights, with implications for how experiential consumption is investigated, orchestrated, managed and experienced in the body.

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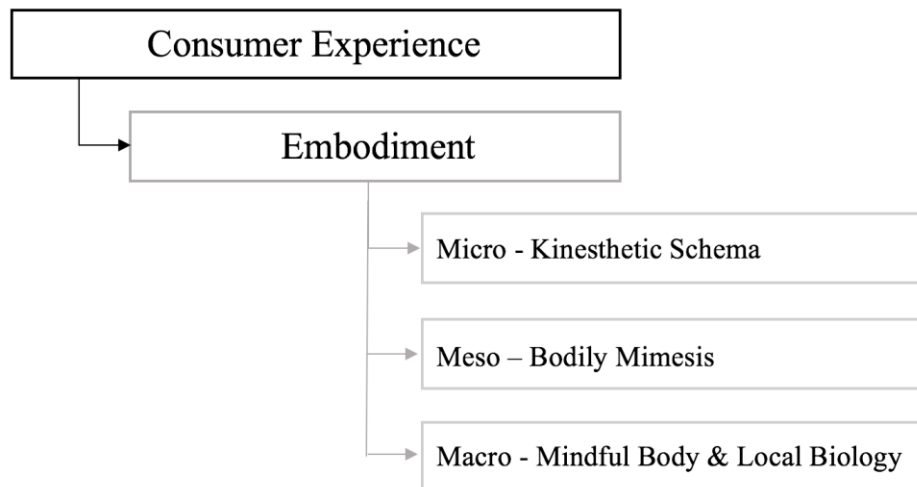
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**Figure 1.** Framework for Embodied Consumption Experiences



**Table I.** Ethnographic Research Sites and Durations

Research Site & Duration	Ethnographic Role	Data
<b>Tough Mudder</b>		
Scotland (2012): 4 days	<i>Event observer</i>	Pictures (132); GoPro video (2 hours); researcher diary (9 pages); field notes (5 pages)
Australia (2012): 1 day	<i>Event participant observer:</i> Team member	28 phenomenological interviews with photo-elicitation before and after the event (73 pages); researcher diary (6 pages); GoPro videos (2 hours); pictures (111)
Australia (2013): 2 days	<i>Event participant observer:</i> Event volunteer  <i>Living with 2 participants:</i> 9 months	24 phenomenological interviews with photo-elicitation before and after the event (27 pages); pictures (117); GoPro videos (2 hours); 2 participant diaries (4 pages); field notes (8 pages)
United States (2015): 1 day	<i>Event participant observer:</i>  Solo team	5 pre-event phenomenological interviews (5 pages); pictures (418); GoPro videos (2 hours); 2 participant diaries (4 pages); field notes (9 pages)
<b>Yacht Racing</b>		
Sydney Harbour Yacht Clubs, Australia (2011): 5 months	<i>Participant observer/volunteer</i>	Field notes (6 pages); GoPro video (3 hours); participant's pictures (45)
Royal Motor Yacht Club, Australia (2011): 4 weeks	<i>Participant observer:</i> Crew member in training	Field notes (11 pages); GoPro video (2 hours)
Pittwater to Coffs Harbour Regatta, Australia (2012): 4 days	<i>Participant observer:</i> Crew member  <i>Living with 2 participants:</i> 7 months	Phenomenological interviews with photo-elicitation before and after the event (14); GoPro video (2 hours); unstructured interviews (7); field notes (4 pages); pictures (209)



**Table II. Embodiment**

Concept	Techniques	Insights	Examples	Illustration
<p><i>Embodiment</i></p> <p>Lived experience of a person's body, as well as life mediated through the body.</p> <p>(e.g., Merleau-Ponty 1964).</p>	<p>Draw attention to flesh, emotions, embodied metaphors, gustatory patterns, bodily transactions, language and symbols.</p> <p>Observe and engage in shared practices, postures, repetitive movements, and spatial juxtapositions.</p>	<p>Photo/video elicitation in interviews helps participants re-embodiment their experience.</p> <p>Participant diaries recall thick multisensory descriptions of embodied encounters.</p> <p>Researcher adopts multiple roles as a participant observer.</p>	<p>Tough Mudder music prepares the body for what lies ahead; the body releases adrenaline in response.</p> <p>During interviews with sailors, the researcher embodies the sensations described through postures, such as the feeling of breath being knocked from the lungs.</p>	<p>The researcher and participants keep a "taste diary" to explore what makes consumers feel joy in a restaurant.</p>

**Table III. Kinesthetic Schema**

Concept	Techniques	Insights	Examples	Illustration
<p><i>Kinesthetic Schema</i></p> <p>Body orientation – to understand being in the world and body awareness.</p> <p>(e.g., Kimmel 2008).</p>	<p>During auto-ethnographic fieldwork, the researcher wears a camera to memorialise body orientation (e.g., GoPro on the head).</p> <p>Video can be analysed to enhance field notes.</p>	<p>By interpreting body positioning, awareness, movement, balance, acceleration, and posture, we can establish how body orientations influence an experience.</p> <p>Making one's body vulnerable during auto-ethnography helps researchers observe previously unobservable processes, such as disorientation.</p>	<p>During interviews, the researcher might ask participants: "Do you feel there is an imbalance?" This technique produces rich material on sensory perceptions.</p> <p>While eight feet up the yacht's forestay, Dylan's muscles pull against gravity to have a destabilising influence on him.</p>	<p>During commercial space flight, different perceived orientations of self-motion take place, from the pull of gravitational forces to weightlessness.</p>

**Table IV. Bodily Mimesis**

Concept	Techniques	Insights	Examples	Illustration
<p><i>Bodily Mimesis</i></p> <p>Mirroring of social and visceral correspondences – to become and behave like something else.</p> <p>(e.g., Kirmayer 1992).</p>	<p>Observe, embody, and record shared social and visceral correspondence.</p> <p>Interlink cognitive, affective, and bodily experiences.</p>	<p>We learn how mimesis functions in nature through different mirrored bodily sensations and cognitive states.</p> <p>Mimesis is a means by which informants organise experiences through interpersonal relations and bodily processes.</p>	<p>Offshore yacht racing produces the mirroring of lethargy, exhaustion, and fear.</p> <p>In adventure racing, mimic sensory experiences enhance cooperation.</p>	<p>The researcher mirrors participants' movements to understand the aesthetic experience of breakthrough technological products.</p>

**Table V. Mindful Body**

Concept	Techniques	Insights	Examples	Illustration
<p><i>Mindful Body</i></p> <p>An integrated mind and body – the mind and body, the self and the other, become one.</p> <p>(e.g., Lock 1993)</p>	<p>Interact symbolically between the body and society.</p> <p>Apply participant's descriptors of the other to the body through the use of metaphors; consumer researcher can extrapolate these metaphors to arrive at higher order meanings.</p>	<p>Dividuality of the self is a useful conceptualisation to understand multisensory views, based on the idea of a permeable self and dynamic interchange between one's body and the environment.</p> <p>Experiencing and analysing a mindful body informs interpretations of multisensory states when a researcher next enters the field.</p>	<p>Patterns and paradoxes of integrated awareness and mindfulness, such as signs of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts.</p> <p>During a yacht race, Carl's senses are attuned to the task. His mind and body are integrated with his environment.</p>	<p>How does smell help us understand commuting experiences on trains? The researcher notes: the meaning of smell, body smell, self-identified odour, and the smell from others.</p>

**Table VI.** Local Biology

Concept	Techniques	Insights	Examples	Illustration
<p><i>Local Biology</i></p> <p>Biology and culture as a continuous feedback loop.</p> <p>(e.g., Nichter 2008).</p>	<p>Synchronise the ethnographer's body with the setting under study and the bodies of the inhabitants.</p> <p>Embody, not just learn, the principles of the culture; the ethnographer's body becomes acculturated at the biological level.</p>	<p>Researchers must learn to calibrate their own bodies through routine bodily regimes.</p> <p>We learn how to understand the way the senses are felt and thought about, including how the general population responds to sensations (e.g., first-time Mudders compared to experienced adventure racers).</p>	<p>Adopt the local diet and the systems inherent within the culture. Eating the same food at the same time and place as the observed sailing crew. While eating, also being subject to the same stressors, such as wind and waves.</p> <p>Sickness, sleeping patterns, diet, and poor hygiene were synchronised.</p>	<p>The researcher shadows participants to investigate how consumers' experience of bicycle-friendly cities compares to non-bicycle-friendly cities.</p>